place during the last six months. Details are furnished in the enclosed statement.

Statement

During the period April-September 1988, four major accidents occurred on Indian Railways as per details below :—

Accidents	Casualty		Cause of accident
	Killed	Injured	
1. Collision between 323 Down Siddheswar Express and 101 Down Minar Express near Byculla station of Central Railway on 4-7-1988.	2	85	According to the provisional findings of the Commissioner of Railway Safety, the accident occurred due to failure of railway staff.
2. Derailment of 26 Down Bangalore Trivandrum Express between Sasthankotta and Perinad stations of Southern Railway on 8-7-1988.	105	201	According to the provisional findings of the Commissioner of Railway Safety, the accident occurred due to failure of railway staff.
3. Accident between 234 Down Fast Passenger and a tractor trailer at an unmanned level crrossing between Chomun Samod and Govindgarh Malikpur stations of Western Railway on 14-9-1988.	10	7	The accident occurred due to negligent driving by tractor driver.
4. Accident between 22 Down passenger train and a bus at an unmanned level crossing between Thakurganj and Taibpur stations of Northeast Frontier Railway on 27-9-1988.	22	43	The accident occurred due to to negligent driving by bus driver.

Committee to look into the poor maintenance of Boeing 737 aircraft

97. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that IA Boeing 737 which crashed at Ahmedabad airport belonged to the first lot of 737s inducted by the IA in 1970;

(b) whether this airline is facing a major problem of shortage of aircrafts poor maintenance of an overworked and ageing fleet and poor quality of its cockpit crew in many cases; and

(c) if so, whether Government proposes to set up a highpowered expert Committee to look into it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian Airlines is at present facing a problem of shortage of aircraft but is in the process of acquiring leased aircraft in November '88 and additional A320 Airbus aircraft from April, 1989 onwards. As far as maintenance is concerned, all aircraft are maintained strictly aircraft in November 88 and additional manufacturers and duly approved by the Director General of Civil Aviation. Various maintenance checks are carried out at specified intervals and certified by appropriately licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineers. The officials of the DGCA also carry out random checks to ensure that the stipulated requirements are adhe-

red to by the airlines. It is not true that Boeing 737 aircraft are over-worked.

Return of Gold of Goans deposited with the Portuguse Bank

98. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present estimated value of gold ornaments desposited by a number of persons in Goa as security for loans with the Portuguese Bank and when they were deposited;

(b) what are the dates on which Government took steps to get back the said ornaments from Portugal and what steps were taken each time;

(c) what results have been achieved in this regard during the last twenty-six years; and

(d) whether Government have since received any official indication about the return of these ornaments and securities from the portuguse side, if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) The present value of the gold ornaments which were deposited with the Portugnese Bank before the liberation of Goa in 1961 is estimated at Rs 5.44h crores approximately.

(b) and (c) Government have been pursuing this matter vigorously since the signing of that Indo-Portugal Treaty on December 31, 1974. Over the years several demarches have been made to the Portugusee Government at various levels. An illustrative list of various demarches made since 1984 is given in the statement (see belers). A dra formulation of the agreement between the State Bank of India and Banco National Ultra marin was discussed in May 1984. Since then efforts are continuing to finalise this agreement.

(d) We have been assured from time to time, at the highest levels of the Portuguese Government, of their desire to resolve this issue at the earliest possible. Latest indications from the Portuguese side are positive. At the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of India and Portugal recently at the UN the assurance was repeated by the Portuguese side. However, we have not yet received any formal communication from the Portuguese Government agreeing to the modalities of signing an agreement which would result in the return of gold ornaments to the rightful owners or their legal heirs.

Statement

Illustrative list of Demarches made to the Portuguese Authorities since 1984

Ambassador of India to Portugal and other senior officers of Embassy of India in Lisbon approached the concerned Portuguese authorities on several occasions between October, 1984 and September, 1988. (1984) October; 1985; May and November; 1986: January, March, May, July, August, November and December: 1987: January, February, March, September; 1988: January, February, March, May, June, July, September).

State Bank of India approached the Banco Nacionale Ultramarinn on various occasions. (1984: May and October; 1985: December).

Ministry of External Affairs took up this matter with the Embassy of Portugal at New Delhi to find an early solution on a number of occasions. (1986: July; 1987 March; 1988: April, August and October).

The Portuguese authorities agreed to resolve this problem expeditiously on several occasions. (1984: October; 1986: January, May, August and November; 1987: June; 1988: May, June and September).